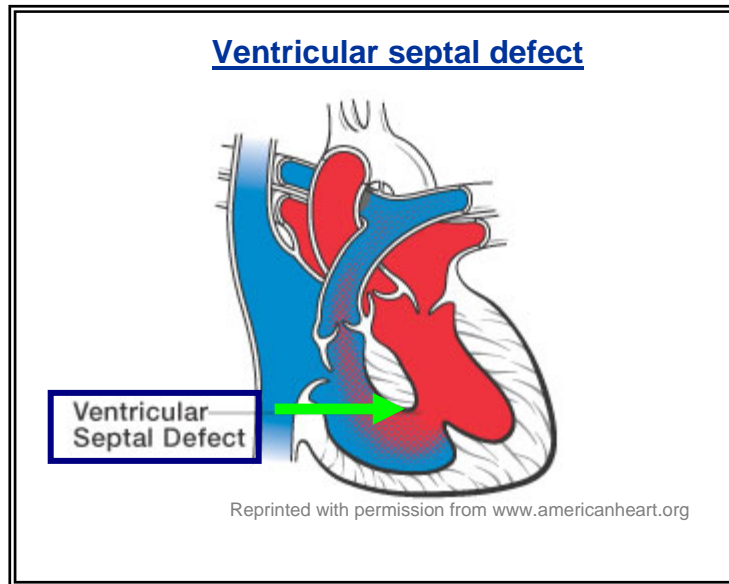


# Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD)

## What is a ventricular septal defect?

A **ventricular septal defect** (VSD) occurs when there is a hole in the **septum** (wall) between the **ventricles** (two lower chambers of the heart). VSDs are the most common type of heart defect present at birth. There are four different types of VSDs (membranous, muscular or trabecular, inlet, and outlet); these names describe where the hole is located in the septum.

When a hole is present between the ventricles, oxygen-rich blood leaks into the right side of the heart and into the lungs. This means that the heart is pumping much more blood than it needs to, which can lead to **enlargement** of the heart and **pulmonary hypertension** (increased blood pressure in the lungs).



## What causes VSDs?

Currently, the exact cause of VSDs is not known. Heredity likely plays a role in the development of all heart defects, meaning that if someone had a congenital heart defect, he or she has an increased chance of having a child with a heart defect.

## How are VSDs treated?

VSDs may be large or small. A person with a small VSD may have a loud murmur (extra heart sound), but no additional heart problems. Depending on the size of the hole, surgery may be necessary to correct the heart defect. Smaller VSDs may spontaneously close over time without surgery.

## For more information

American Heart Association - <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=11105>

Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center's Heart Center Encyclopedia – <http://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/health/heart-encyclopedia/default.htm>

MedlinePlus - <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/congenitalheartdefects.html>

National Heart Lung and Blood Institute - [http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/chd/chd\\_what.html](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/chd/chd_what.html)

**Sources:** Cincinnati Children's Hospital, American Heart Association